



USING QR CODES TO ACCELERATE THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND MARKET YOUR TST OR JA PROGRAM

They appear everywhere these days and are hard to miss. You see them on product packaging, magazine and newspaper ads, billboards, promotional coupons, art gallery exhibits, business cards and much more. They are QR (Quick Response) codes, and if you're not using them, you may be missing out on a low-cost way to enhance your Technical Skills Training (TST) or Jobs Accelerator (JA) recruitment efforts and streamline your program operations.

WHAT ARE QR CODES?



QR Codes are two-dimensional, square shaped symbols that look like a maze. When a QR Code is scanned by a smartphone or a tablet's camera, the user is directed immediately to a specific webpage.

Most smartphones come with an application that can be used to scan QR Codes, and free scanning applications are readily available for those that do not. It's very easy to create a QR Code at no cost using online tools, and we've included links to QR Code generators in this bulletin.

WHY SHOULD MY TST OR JA PROGRAM USE QR CODES?

QR Codes offer many exciting opportunities for connecting your program with the growing number of people who are using mobile technology. They allow you to connect with people on-the-go and make it easy for them to find your website. A QR Code can be used to direct a person to an online application form, a downloadable brochure or information sheet, or a social media application such as LinkedIn or Facebook. You could, for example, place a QR Code on your agency brochure with the caption, "learn how our training program can increase your earning capacity" and link it to a webpage that describes the benefits of your program. Or you might want to use a QR code to link to an online application form with the caption "Apply Now!" These uses of

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QR Codes will streamline the process of providing information to prospective students and reduce the paperwork associated with the application process, a win-win situation for everyone.

Because QR Codes are interactive, they encourage prospective participants to engage in the program in the easiest possible way. They also allow you to track the effectiveness of your marketing materials, since webpage "hits" can be counted. If each QR Code is linked to a different webpage that has identical content, you can determine how many people sought information in response to a specific brochure, poster, or a promotional item.

HOW DO I USE A QR CODE?

Your smartphone or tablet probably has a QR Code reader, but if it does not, open the store or marketplace app and do a search on "QR Codes." Whether you are using the Android or iOS platform, there are many free apps to choose from. The process of scanning a QR Code takes a few seconds, and the software you are using will walk you through the process. Try using your smartphone or tablet to scan the above QR Code. It will bring you to valuable resources that can help your program achieve better outcomes.

HOW DO I CREATE A QR CODE?

It's very easy to create a QR Code at no cost using code generators found on the Internet. The website captured in the illustration below (<http://www.qrstuff.com/>) uses a simple 3-step

process. You select the data type, enter the website URL and click on “DOWNLOAD QR CODE.” This will download the QR Code image which you can copy and paste into a document or save for future use. You’ll notice that there are many different types of data codes that can be used. You can create QR Codes that connect users to YouTube videos, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, contact information, and a host of other data types. This opens up many possibilities for connecting mobile users with your organization’s staff and marketing materials.



QR CODE GENERATORS

Here are a few websites that generate QR Codes at no cost. The list is not exhaustive and you may want use a Google search on QR Code generators to see other options.

QR Stuff

<http://www.qrstuff.com/index.html>

The QR Code Generator

<https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com/>

Kaywa QR Code

<http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>

GoQRme

<http://goqr.me/>

QR Codes can be used on posters, program literature and handouts in a variety of ways.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT I NEED TO KNOW?

Because mobile devices have small screens, make sure that you are directing the user to a website that is mobile friendly. Keep the webpage simple and easy to use. Test it out using the Android and iOS platforms and make sure it works for the user. Here are some more tips:

- ❖ Don't assume that people know how to use QR Codes. Offer a brief explanation in language that is easy to understand, and make sure that you give your audience an incentive to scan the code.
- ❖ Use it when it makes sense and provides value to your audience. Make sure that the QR Code links to information of interest and value, and if it links to a form, ensure that it is easy to complete and submit.

If you are going to use it on posters, make sure that cell phone coverage is available in the area.

